



# THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

## **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 0430:**

### **Police Immunity and Accountability Act**

**\*\*FAVORABLE\*\***

February 21, 2023

**TO:** Hon. Luke Clippinger, Chair, Hon. David Moon, Vice Chair and the members of the House Judiciary Committee

**FROM:** Rev. Kenneth O. Phelps, Jr., Co-Chair, Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network, Diocese of Maryland

**DATE:** February 21, 2023

The Episcopal Church. In its 2018 General Convention resolution on police violence and racism, stated, “that while we honor and raise up the work of dedicated police officers who put their lives on the line to serve and protect, we also acknowledge the numerous inexcusable deaths and intimidation of people of color at the hands of law enforcement personnel in communities all over the United States”

Episcopalians are further urged to “join community and grassroots leaders in advocating ... substantive and mandatory change in police departments and policing and to allocate resources for community-based models of safety, support and prevention.”

In that spirit, the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland and its member parishes strongly urge a favorable report on this bill. This bill will help to ensure that officers are held accountable for willful acts of omission and obstruction of the truth. We also support this bill because we know that an incremental approach will not solve the urgent problem of police violence nor will it have a mitigating impact on the systemic racism that feeds and sustains it. Only a comprehensive approach will do, and we applaud the Judiciary Committee for considering just that.

Ending police violence can only benefit everyone. Enacting these measures would be another great step. People – especially people of color - have suffered under this system for far too long.

The Diocese of Maryland requests a favorable report.